

To Whom It May Concern:

This statement has been written on behalf of the Lady Vol Volleyball team, in order to convey our motives in a precise and detailed manner. We feel that to continue this program under the leadership of Julie Hermann is crippling mentally, physically and most importantly to our success as a division I volleyball team. The mental cruelty that we as a team have suffered is unbearable. Countless nights have been spent crying to our parents and friends, in hopes that someday it might get better. Some of us have been here 3 years and the situation has yet to improve.

We have been lied to, publically humiliated, and ripped apart as both players and people. The Lady Vol image is one of respect, pride and hard work. It is very difficult to respect someone who refers to her players as whores, alcoholics and learning disabled. We have tried to suppress these feelings and just play the game. However, the mental aspect of a sport is often the most important and in Julie Hermann's gym the only emotion is fear. Fear to try something new, to better ourselves as players, or to ask a simple question. We have found ourselves holding back and essentially limiting our potential in fear of what she may do to us physically and mentally. She has succeeded in taking a sport that we have all dedicated our lives to and making it the enemy. There is no heart in our game, for it has been trampled on one too many times. We have all come to hate the game we love. This realization has not been an easy one for us but rather a last resort.

All we want to do is win and be a part of something meaningful in the process. Being a Lady Vol is a dream of many children, and perhaps what drew some of us here. But from our perspective, being a lady vol leaves much to be desired. We count the minutes until practice is over, and the days until season ends. It got so bad that many of us couldn't care less if we made it to the NCAA tournament. The sooner the season ended the sooner we could reclaim our lives, our dignity and a piece of ourselves that we may never get back. That part of our soul that we were willing to give up, to put on the line for the greater good of our team, was ultimately crushed. For in the end we had

a team of 16 individuals who had not intentions of working together for a common goal but for perfecting their own individual game so as not to be demeaned and ridiculed. It is obvious that nothing can get accomplished in this manner, as proven by our record.

Most of all we feel cheated. Yes, we may have had a more successful season, but not one of us is proud of our accomplishment. We know that we could have and should have done much better, we know that this is a poor reflection on the University and the program and we know that we can be a top 25 team. But, we cannot do it alone and we certainly cannot do it with an anchor dragging us down. Julie has succeeded in tearing our team apart. From the first day of preseason, it has been her intention to pit us against one another. This was not in a healthy competitive manner, but rather a backstabbing event in which Julie supplied the knife. The lack of unity on our team, resulting from this, can be directly related to our lack of success. The first time we have felt like a true team is unfortunately under the current situation. We would like to believe that things will change and that the situation can improve, but we heard all the excuses, justifications and rationalizations. It has been unanimously decided that this is an irreconcilable issue. On a positive note, we are prepared to work together to resolve the problem and get focused on the real goal: making the Lady Vol Volleyball team a national threat.

Thank You,

Sincerely,

The Lady Vol Volleyball Team